greatly impressed with Taoism and Buddhism, and while he later turned to what he deemed the classical Confucian tradition, he never escaped from the influence of these faiths. His was an intellect which delighted in synthesis and he was gifted both with clarity of thought and with an admirable literary style. Through his mind passed the ideas of the predecessors of the school to which he eventually gave himself, and adding to them and giving to the whole the interpretation and integration which were the fruits of his own genius he left behind him that system of thought which for centuries was to dominate the majority of the scholars of his race. In the entire history of mankind, few thinkers havt been so influential as he.

To summarize accurately and in a few words the tenets to which Chu Hsi gave their standard form is a difficult undertaking, particularly since to the Occidental rnind many of his concepts seem strange.

As we have said, the school was partly shaped by Buddhism, and especially by the Ch'an sect, which was so highly esteemed among the educated of the time. Ch'an declared that true insight and knowledge come through inner enlightenment. To be sure, Buddhism was declining. Its decay, which seems to have begun under the T'ang, may have been hastened by the policies of the financially embarrassed Sung. At least occasionally the state sold ranks and titles of temples and priests. Then, too, some of the rich entered the priesthood to escape the burdens of taxation and military duty. At times monks were accused of usury. All this contributed to the popular disdain of the faith. However, Buddhism was still a potent factor in the Empire and could not be disregarded by the educated.

Taoism, too, contributed markedly to Neo-Confucianism, and especially to Chu Hsi. Chu Hsi's writings contain a good deal of Neo-Taoist metaphysics.

Many of the Sung Confucianists showed the effects of their Buddhist environment by practising meditation. This they did from an ethical and spiritual motive—to cultivate the nobler and to eliminate the baser side of their natures. The better to succeed, they often retired to quiet and beautiful spots, sometimes alone, at other times collectively—pupils clustering about some revered teacher. These groups of students around their teachers,